R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 019 201 RE 001 223

STATE CERTIFICATION OF READING TEACHERS AND SPECIALISTS -- REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL SCENE.

BY- KINDER, ROBERT FARRAR

PUB DATE APR 68

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$0.60 13P.

DESCRIPTORS- *TEACHER CERTIFICATION, *STATE AGENCIES, *STATE STANDARDS, *STATE SURVEYS, *READING CONSULTANTS, COURSES, COURSE DESCRIPTIONS, READING INSTRUCTION, SPECIALISTS,

THE CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR READING PERSONNEL AT THE STATE LEVEL FOR 50 STATES, THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, AND PUERTO RICO WERE STUDIED. QUESTIONNAIRES WERE MAILED TO THE STATE EDUCATION CERTIFICATION OFFICERS. TWENTY-FIVE OF THE 52 AGENCIES POLLED REQUIRED CERTIFICATION FOR READING SPECIALISTS. MOST STATES DID NOT REQUIRE SPECIAL TRAINING FOR PERSONS WHO TAUGHT OR SUPERVISED READING CLASSES OR PROGRAMS. THE STATE AGENCIES IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES AND TEACHER-TRAINING INSTITUTIONS AS THE GROUPS WHO INITIATED THE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM. NINE STATE AGENCIES CERTIFIED A READING SPECIALIST, EIGHT A SPECIAL TEACHER OF READING, EIGHT A CLINICIAN, SEVEN A SUPERVISOR, AND FOUR A READING CONSULTANT. EIGHT READING CERTIFICATION CREDENTIALS APPEARED TO MEET THE INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION'S STANDARDS. OF THE 27 STATES THAT DID NOT HAVE CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS, 15 ARE IN VARIOUS STAGES OF DEVELOPING A PROGRAM. QUESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ARE INCLUDED. THIS PAPER WAS PRESENTED AT THE INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE (BOSTON, APRIL 24-27, 1968). (BK)

ED019201

Dr. Robert Farrar Kinder
English and Reading Consultant
State Department of Education, Box 2219
Hartford, Connecticut 06115

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

[INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION, BOSTON, APR. 24-27, 1968]

Session 8A

STATE CERTIFICATION OF READING TEACHERS AND SPECIALISTS: REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL SCENE

Reading specialists work in local schools in all fifty states, the District of Columbia, and in Puerto Rico. Many local districts in some states have special teachers of reading and reading consultants or supervisors on their school staffs. Most of the public probably believes that the titles these staff members hold (remedial reading teacher, reading clinician, reading consultant, etc.) are evidence of a certain amount of training and experience. They may be--and they also may not! While highly qualified reading specialists currently work in all states, in 1968 half of the states in the United States still make it possible for someone to work as a school reading specialist with little or no specialized training or experience in the teaching of reading. Whether a reading title guarantees anything particular about the person holding it is largely a matter of geography; a matter of the state or local district in which this person works!

This Study

The findings reported in this study are a result of interpreting and tabulating responses to a questionnaire mailed to state education agency certification officers in the fifty states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Each officer was asked to respond to seven or eight items on the questionnaire (seven items for states that do not require and eight items for states that do require specific certification for reading teachers or specialists). Certification officers of all fifty states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico responded. This study is an attempt to draw a composite picture from these fifty-two completed questionnaires and from the certification requirements now in force for school reading specialists in all states that require such certification.

Current Status

Prevalence of required reading certification. In response to the question

> Does your state now have specific certification requirements for reading teachers, specialists, consultants, or supervisors?

twenty-three certification officers replied "yes" and twenty-nine replied "no." Two of the twenty-nine who had replied "no" (Colorado and Montana) indicated that their states already had reading certification or endorsement but that it was not required at this time. One ~~other~~ STATE THAT SAID "YES" (California) pointed out that his state's certification was required only for teachers in state-funded programs. So it appears that twenty-five of the fifty-two state agencies presently have certification or endorsement for reading specialists and twenty-three of the fifty-two require this certification for at least some of the people who do this work in their local schools.

Other acceptable certification for handling reading. Thirty-six of the fifty-two certification officers responded to the question

> What other certificate(s), if any, enable(s) a person to teach special reading groups or classes?

Their responses were as follows:

None (3/36)	8%
Elementary Teacher (30/36).	83%
Secondary Teacher of English (11/36)	31%
Secondary Teacher (7/36).	19%
Special Education (3/36).	8%
Remedial Teacher (1/36)	3%

Thirty-one certification officers responded to the question

> What other certificate(s), if any, enable(s) a person to supervise a school reading program?

Their responses were:

None (8/31)	26%
Supervisor (14/31).	45%
Elementary Teacher (7/31)	23%
Principal (5/31).	16%
Secondary Teacher (3/31).	10%
Secondary Teacher of English (2/31)	6%
Special Education (1/31).	3%

From these responses it appears that in many of the states an elementary or secondary school teaching certificate is sufficient indication that a person is equipped to provide reading instruction for special groups or classes of pupils and a supervisor's, elementary-school teacher's, or principal's credential is sufficient for supervising a school reading program. In short, most states require no special training or experience in

the teaching of reading either of all persons who teach special reading groups and classes or of all persons who supervise a school reading program.

Characteristics of required reading certification. The twenty-three state certification officers who said their state agency required special reading certification were asked to name groups of people which participated in developing this certification, to tell whether certification required for reading supervisors was different from that required for reading teachers, and to provide a copy of their current reading certification requirements.

When asked to identify all groups of people which were instrumental in initiating their reading certification program, certification officers mentioned most frequently groups from the 1)state education agency and 2) teacher-training institutions. 100% of those who responded named "state education agency"; 95% named "teacher-training institutions"; 67% said "local school staffs"; 57% said "reading organization," and 29% named other groups such as professional organizations (other than reading organizations), the PTA, and the State Legislature.

When asked to identify all groups which contributed representatives to help draft their certification requirements, again "state education agency" and "teacher-training institution" were most frequently mentioned. 92% of those who responded said their certification requirements were drafted by representatives from the "state education agency"; 85% said "teacher-training institution"; 62% said "reading organization"; 54% said "local school staffs," and 8% named other groups.

It appears that groups from the state education agency and teacher-training institutions play a dominant role, both in making known the need for this certification and in contributing representatives to help create it. In only slightly more than half of the states requiring reading

certification did reading organizations or local school staffs play a part either in initiating or in drafting this certification program.

Several different reading titles are certified or endorsed by the twenty-three state agencies which require certification in reading. Fourteen state agencies certify only one title; five agencies list two titles; two list three, and two state agencies list four. These titles and the number of state agencies certifying for them are:

Reading Specialist (9)

Special Teacher of Reading (8)

Remedial Reading Teacher or Clinician (8)

Reading Supervisor/Coordinator/Director (7)

Reading Consultant (4)

While nine of the twenty-three states certify more than one title, in some states a single title enables a certified specialist to take on a number of different reading assignments. For instance, Connecticut certifies a single title, Reading Consultant, however, Connecticut's certification regulations state that

> . . . they shall be required for anyone serving as a supervisor, consultant, coordinator, director or special teacher in the area of reading instruction, including anyone whose function is (1) to work with teachers and other school personnel in curriculum planning and revision as it relates to the total reading program; (2) to assist classroom teachers, other teachers of reading and other school personnel in improving instruction in reading; or (3) to provide special remedial reading instruction for elementary and/or secondary students.

In response to the question

> Is certification of reading supervisors different from that required for reading teachers?

64% of the certification officers in states that require special reading certification or endorsement said "yes."

The thirty-eight different certification credentials in existence among the twenty-three states that require special reading certification have several characteristics in common:

86% require a previously-held, classroom teaching certificate

70% require one to five years of teaching experience (either teaching reading or teaching other subjects; most require three or more years of experience)

97% require twelve or more semester hours of collegiate training in the teaching of reading

59% require at least one course or three semester hours of collegiate training in a clinical or laboratory practicum (22% require six or more hours)

57% require twelve or more semester hours of graduate level training in the teaching of reading

54% require a Master's degree or its equivalent in graduate training

Study of these thirty-eight reading credentials shows that most of them do not meet the criteria set forth in "Minimum Standards For The Professional Training Of Reading Specialists" published in 1965 by the International Reading Association. Many require fewer than three years of successful teaching and/or clinical experience. About half of them require less than a Master's degree or its equivalent of a Bachelor's degree plus thirty graduate hours. Some are not clear on how many hours should be devoted to courses in the teaching of reading or to study in areas closely related to reading. Only eight reading credentials appear to meet IRA's minimum standards. These certificates and the state that issues each of them are:

Reading Consultant (Connecticut)

Reading Consultant (Minnesota)

Reading Supervisor (Delaware)

Reading Supervisor (New Jersey)

Rank II Reading (Florida)

Reading Specialist (Oklahoma)

Rank I Reading (Florida)

Reading Specialist (West Virginia)

The areas of study mentioned in these certification credentials are generally quite diverse. Most commonly specified studies concerned with the teaching of reading and the number of reading credentials that name them are:

Diagnosis and Correction of Reading Disabilities (27)

Basic Methods or Foundations Course in Teaching Reading (19)

Remedial-Corrective Reading Techniques (15)

Developmental Reading, Elementary and/or Secondary (9)

Methods and Materials of Teaching Reading (8)

Organization-Supervision-Administration of Reading Programs (8)

Frequently mentioned studies in areas related to the teaching of reading and the number of reading credentials that name them are:

Psychology, including Child, Adolescent, Learning (22)

Measurement and Evaluation, including Mental Testing (18)

General Supervision (8)

Child and/or Adolescent Literature (7)

Curriculum Development (6)

Personal and/or Mental Hygiene (5)

Future Prospects

Changes in current state certification. Certification officers in the twenty-three states that require special certification or endorsement for reading teachers or specialists were asked

> At this time are changes in your certification being developed?

Two did not respond to this question. Certification officers in sixteen of the twenty-one states responding indicated that they were not presently engaged in changing their existing reading certification programs although

several officers pointed out that existing programs are regularly reviewed and evaluated. Five certification officers responded that people in their states (Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin) were now in the process of developing changes in their existing certification programs for reading teachers and/or specialists. By 1970 about one fourth of the states that now require certification should have made changes in their present programs.

Development of new state certification. Certification officers in the twenty-nine state agencies that do not now require special certification for reading teachers or specialists were asked to respond to three questions about the future:

1. Is specific reading certification being developed at this time? YES NO

2. Is development of specific reading certification being planned? YES NO

3. If you circled "YES" in response to question #1 or #2, when do you expect this certification will become effective? _____

Since Colorado and Montana already have certification programs for reading specialists although this certification is not required for reading personnel working in their local schools, only twenty-seven of the twenty-nine certification officers in states that do not require reading certification were able to answer these questions. Of these twenty-seven

2 states are in the early-discussion stage of planning for reading certification

2 states are planning to adopt the "approved program" approach for reading certification (apparently without development of state guidelines for "approved" programs)

5 states are engaged in planning for the development of reading certification programs

6 states now are developing (writing) reading certification programs

Ten of the fifteen state officers who indicated their state education agency currently was planning for or was developing a specific reading certification program forecasted when they believed this certification would become effective. If their estimates hold true, ten additional states should have reading certification programs by 1970. These states and the year when their certification programs are likely to become effective are:

1968 — Alaska, Arkansas, Nevada, New Mexico

1969 — Hawaii, Nebraska, North Carolina, Rhode Island

1970 — Ohio, Vermont

When added to the twenty-three states that now require specific reading certification and the two states that have certification but do not require it, these ten states with new certification programs will bring the total to thirty-five state education agencies that will have specific reading certification programs by 1970.

In addition to these thirty-five, one state (Alabama) already has approved a program to prepare remedial reading specialists at its state university, and three states (Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan) report that they are in the very early discussion stages of planning for specific reading certification and it is too early to say when—if ever—these programs might become effective. These four states would bring the total to thirty-nine state agencies with reading certification programs at some time in the future. If all forecasts materialize as expected, the tally for state agencies in the future would be <u>thirty-nine with</u> and <u>thirteen without</u> specific reading certification programs.

What about the thirteen states whose certification officers don't see reading certification programs in the forseeable future? These are the agencies in Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Maine, New York, Oregon, Puerto Rico,

South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, and Washington. According to figures that can be found in the 1967 edition of the Digest Of Educational Statistics published by the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare, the total number of public elementary and secondary school children in these thirteen states is estimated to be 13,365,000. This figure represents approximately 33% of the total number of children in these grades throughout the United States in 1967. This same publication gives statistics which show that in these same thirteen states, with the exclusion of Puerto Rico for which there is no comparable data, the number of illiterates, fifteen years old and over, in 1967 was 1,100,000 or approximately 30% of the total illiterate population of the United States for that year.

Movement toward "approved program" approach. One final question was asked of all fifty-two state certification officers. This question was

> A number of states are tending toward a "program-approval approach" to certification. In your opinion, is such a procedure likely to occur in your state within the next ten years?

This question was poorly-phrased. Several state officers pointed out that their state already had adopted the "program-approval approach" (the certification approach by which college-training programs rather than specific college courses are approved). Indeed, some states had followed this procedure for as long as twenty years!

Nevertheless, fifty state certification officers indicated that their state either already had adopted or was likely to adopt the "program-approval approach" within the next ten years. There is some evidence from the data provided for this study, however, which seems to indicate that "program-approval approach" is implemented differently among the states that already have it. Some states have developed guidelines that spell out in

detail the areas of study and credit hours that must be contained in "approved" college programs. Other states appear to have no guidelines at all. One state (Pennsylvania) has developed a comprehensive guidelines publication which describes the general objectives, staffing, facilities, and student proficiencies expected of "approvable" college-training programs for reading specialists. If this procedure is as diversely implemented as it appears to be, even with "program-approval," whether a reading title guarantees anything particular about the training, experience and competencies of the person who holds it will still depend largely on the state or the local district in which that person works!

Questions and Recommendations

The results of this study generate several questions:

1. In the states that permit certified elementary teachers, scondary teachers of English, and secondary teachers of other subjects to teach special reading groups and classes does the training and experience required for these certificates adequately equip persons who hold them to do such teaching?

2. In states that permit certified general supervisors, principals, and teachers to supervise a school reading program does the training and experience required for these certificates adequately equip persons who hold them to undertake such supervision?

3. In states where certification for reading supervisors does not differ from that required for reading teachers are certified reading teachers adequately trained and experienced to supervise a school reading program?

4. In the states that already have reading certification programs why weren't local and state IRA councils represented more frequently among the groups instrumental in helping to develop specific reading certification programs?

5. What are local and state IRA councils doing to initiate and help draft specific reading certification programs in states that presently have none?

6. Why isn't successful classroom teaching experience a prerequisite in all states for personnel certified as reading teachers or specialists?

7. Why isn't a practicum in working with teachers more frequently required for certification as a reading consultant or supervisor?

8. Why aren't linguistics, children's literature, and adolescent literature mentioned more frequently as important areas of study for reading certification?

9. What can be done to insure that "program-approval approaches" adopted by state education agencies will insure an adequate standard of proficiency among students trained by various colleges and universities in a state?

In conclusion, four major recommendations that result from this study are:

First, the profession and the public should exert every effort to make certain that every school is adequately staffed by persons competent to provide an effective program of reading instruction.

Second, the profession and the public should exert every effort to make certain that only persons with sufficient proficiency to provide for effective reading instruction are given the title of reading teacher, reading consultant, reading specialist, reading supervisor, reading director or reading coordinator.

Third, the content of current state reading certification programs should be reviewed carefully to insure that every existing program assures the kind of training, experience, and proficiency that will prepare certified reading specialists who are effective in their work.

Fourth, reading organizations such as local and state IRA councils should become more actively involved in initiating and helping to develop state reading certification programs, particularly in states that currently have none.

It is without question that many highly-qualified reading teachers and specialists presently work in all fifty states, in the District of Columbia, and in Puerto Rico. Improved state reading certification standards can protect the professional status of these teachers and specialists and, at the same time, it can strengthen reading instruction for more children and youth.